



Early Years Policy

Respectful, Resilient and Responsible Learners

Subject Leader: C. Hall

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This policy describes the first stage of education at Abingdon Primary School:

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Intent

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, at Abingdon Primary School, we...

- Give each child a happy, positive and fun start to their school life at Abingdon.
- Place great value on the development of children as individuals, and provide them with the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to prepare them for the challenges in Key Stage One and beyond.
- Encourage the children to become respectful, resilient and responsible learners.
- Provide an exciting, safe and purposeful learning environment, that evolves with the children's development and their interests.
- Provide the children with a balanced curriculum, which involves both child-led learning and adult directed learning, through topic-based themes.
- Provide the children with rich opportunities to learn through play.
- Establish strong relationships with parents and carers and communicate effectively between school and home.
- Strive for the children to become independent, so they have the skills to succeed in life beyond Abingdon.
- Value each child as an individual, and understand that children develop at different rates.
- Strongly believe that within a child's time in Reception, we are building the foundations to aid progression throughout their education.

Implementation

Our Early Years Curriculum

At Abingdon Primary School we follow the 'The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' (2021) which is based upon four overarching principles:

- **A Unique Child** – Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- **Positive Relationships** – Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
- **Enabling Environments** – Children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents/carers.
- **Learning and Development** – Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

These four overarching principles, in conjunction with the seven areas of learning identified in The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2021), underpin our EYFS Curriculum at Abingdon. We recognise that all seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected, but there are three areas that are particularly important for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, for building children's capacity for learning and to help them form relationships and thrive.

These are the **prime areas**:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

We also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The **specific areas** are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

Planning and Teaching

Each area of learning is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mixture of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through high-quality, positive interactions. As the children grow and progress throughout their time in Reception, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities, to help prepare the children for more formal learning in Year 1.

At Abingdon Primary School we endeavour to provide the children with real life opportunities that they may not have experienced prior to starting our school. With this in mind, our EYFS Curriculum is based on a variety of topics that change throughout the year (see Early Years Long Term Plan). The topics we have chosen allow us to explicitly teach the fundamental concepts that the children require in order to meet the Early Learning Goals (ELG's), at the end of Reception. The learning is planned on a half termly basis and the learning stems from a high-quality text which allows us to teach, embed and extend the children's vocabulary. Within the Spring and Summer Terms, we also use some aspects of the Jane Considine's 'Fantastic Foundations' scheme, which we have linked into our Literacy and Topic based learning. This is a system that puts key aspects of communication at the heart of our teaching. By using Jane's methods, pupils' language will be nurtured through developing ideas, strengthening talk and widening writing opportunities.

"The EYFS is about how children learn, as well as what they learn. Children need opportunities to develop their own play and independent exploration. This is enjoyable and motivating. They also need adults to 'scaffold' their learning by giving them just enough help to achieve something they could not do independently. Helping children to think, discuss and plan ahead is important, like gathering the materials they need to make a den before they start building. These are ways of helping children to develop the characteristics of effective learning."

Development Matters July 2021

Development Matters

In conjunction with the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021 we also refer to the Non-statutory curriculum guidance of Development Matters (July, 2021). This document not only supports our professional judgement, but helps us set out a pathway for children's development in broad ages and stages. At various points within the year we look at the individual development of each child and track their progress within the stages.

These stages are:

- Birth to three – babies, toddlers and young children
- 3 and 4-year-olds
- Children in Reception
- Early Learning Goals (at the end of the Summer Term)

We also break these stages down further into smaller steps and look at whether the children are entering, developing or secure within that particular stage, within a certain area. This data is then analysed and used to inform our teaching, planning of the environment and helps us to identify children who need interventions, to help close the gap.

The Learning Environment

At Abingdon Primary School, we have two Reception Classrooms. Both classrooms are set out in Learning Areas, and are well-organised, to allow the children to explore and learn independently, securely and safely. All areas are resourced and labelled, so that the children are encouraged to use them and engage in purposeful activities, with or without an adult. Staff regularly reflect on the learning environment, and ensure that it reflects ongoing assessments, and the interests of the children. Each Reception Classroom has their own toilets attached.

The two Reception Classrooms also share an Outside Area, which provides the children with different challenges and experiences. The children have access to the Outside Area every day, no matter what the weather!

Parental Involvement

At Abingdon Primary School, we recognise that parents and carers play a vital role within their child's development. We aim to build a strong partnership between staff and parents/carers, right from the start of their child's education journey at Abingdon Primary School. We do this by:

- Inviting parents to a 'New Intake Welcome Meeting' in the Summer Term, before their child starts school in September.
- Arranging home visits, so the staff are able to find out more information about individual children, in an environment that is familiar to the child.
- Send home an 'All about me' form so that the teachers can get an insight into the child's interests and dislikes from the very start.
- Inviting parents into school twice a year (Autumn and Spring) for Parent/Carer Consultation Appointments.
- Sending weekly newsletters via the Class Dojo, to inform Parents and Carers on the learning that has taken place during that week
- Using the Class Dojo app to aid communication
- Sending home a Spring and Summer Report to provide parents/carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding, abilities and next steps
- 'Thumbs up Friday' where the parents are invited into school to explore the learning environment alongside their child, and look at their child's Memory Book.
- Staff being present at the Reception Gate each morning, to welcome the children into the classroom.

Impact

Assessment

Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, plan activities and assess the need for further support. Ongoing assessment (formative assessment), is an integral part of the children's learning and development process in the EYFS. Staff observe children daily, to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to identify developmental gaps, support adaptations, inform children's next steps in learning, and monitor their progress. At Abingdon Primary School, we also undertake various summative assessments, and these are detailed below:

Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA)

The Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is a short assessment, which is taken in the first six weeks in which a child starts Reception. The RBA assesses the children in Early Mathematics, Literacy, and Communication and Language.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP)

The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) is a comprehensive assessment, that is completed in the final term of Reception. The profile provides a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and attainment against the Early Learning Goals (ELGs), and their readiness for Year 1. Teachers make a professional, best-fit judgement with regards to each child's level of development, taking into consideration the whole child and drawing on their knowledge of each child. The level of development children should be expected to have attained by the end of Reception, is defined by the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELG's) given in the table below.

Communication and Language	Personal, Social & Emotional Development	Physical Development	Literacy	Mathematics	Understanding the World	Expressive Art & Design
ELG: Listening, Attention and Understanding ELG: Speaking	ELG: Self-Regulation ELG: Managing Self ELG: Building Relationships	ELG: Gross Motor Skills ELG: Fine Motor Skills	ELG: Comprehension ELG: Word Reading ELG: Writing	ELG: Number ELG: Numerical Patterns	ELG: Past & Present ELG: People, Culture & Communities ELG: The Natural World	ELG: Creating with Materials ELG: Being Imaginative and Expressive

The school reports the EYFS Profile results to the Local Authority (LA) when these are requested. The LA is under a duty to return this data to the relevant government department. Reasonable adjustments will be made to the assessment process for children with SEND as appropriate.

Additional Assessments that take place:

- Language Link Assessment, which forms Communication and Language Groups, that run throughout the academic year.
- Observations, interactions, questioning and planning next steps
- Independent Challenges
- Marking and Assessing children's work, using the School Marking Policy
- Termly Progress and Attainment Tracking
- Half termly Read Write Inc (RWI) assessments

Alongside this, photographs, observations including pupil voice and samples of work are collected to help support our teacher judgement of each child's development. Teachers and Teaching Assistants record 'learning moments' and highlight where adult interactions and questioning, has moved the children's learning forward.

Role of the Subject Lead & Monitoring

The role of the subject lead is to ensure consistency between the two Reception classes, making sure the children are receiving the same learning diet and experiences. Alongside this, the subject lead needs to ensure that quality first teaching takes place and ensure the children are making progress.

In order to achieve this, the following takes place over the year:

- Analysing data and identifying areas of concern
- Learning walks and discussions with children
- Lessons observations
- Weekly team meetings which includes the attendance of all Early Years staff
- Learning Journey and 'Book Looks' to monitor progress, attainment and standards
- Professional dialogue between all members of the Early Years Team
- Pupil Progress Meetings
- Internal moderation
- Regular review of the impact of interventions